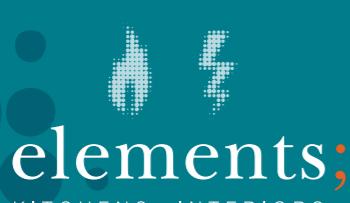




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october | november 2012



# From the editorial group

“

As the 'season of mists and mellow fruitfulness' approaches we can look back upon an exciting summer of the Jubilee and the amazing Olympic and Paralympic celebrations!! Let us hope that life will not be dull after such excitement.

Closer to home, the pupils and teachers of our village schools have a great deal to celebrate in their much improved examination results. We are delighted for them and wish them well in their future education.

The village has looked especially attractive over the summer months, despite the weather, with the hanging baskets, flower beds and now the trees blooming beautifully. They really do make the centre a more attractive place. Many of the gardens were also stunning and it must have been difficult to select the winners.

I was absolutely delighted with the response to my request for information about the life and contribution made by Sibella Bonham Carter to Sonning Common. I received so many lovely anecdotes and memories it was not possible to publish them all and it was really difficult to select from such a mass of data.

All of your contributions do add considerable value and diversity to the magazine – thank you and please keep emailing them to me.



**DIANA PEARMAN** Editor 2012  
Email: [editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org](mailto:editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org)

PS...

Sonning Common Magazine is on sale at the village library in Grove Road for £1.50 a copy. Annual subscriptions are available for £15. Contact Geoffrey Adams. Email: [chairman@sonningcommonmagazine.org](mailto:chairman@sonningcommonmagazine.org)  
Phone: 0118 972 2134

Magazine contributions may be posted to: 1 Woodlands Road, Sonning Common RG4 9TD.

WHILE EVERY EFFORT IS MADE TO ENSURE THE ACCURACY OF INFORMATION PRINTED IN THIS MAGAZINE, THE EDITOR AND THE PUBLISHER CANNOT ACCEPT ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF ERRORS THAT OCCUR.

sonningcommon  
magazine

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# Congratulations 1... Sonning Common Primary School pupils SATS Success!

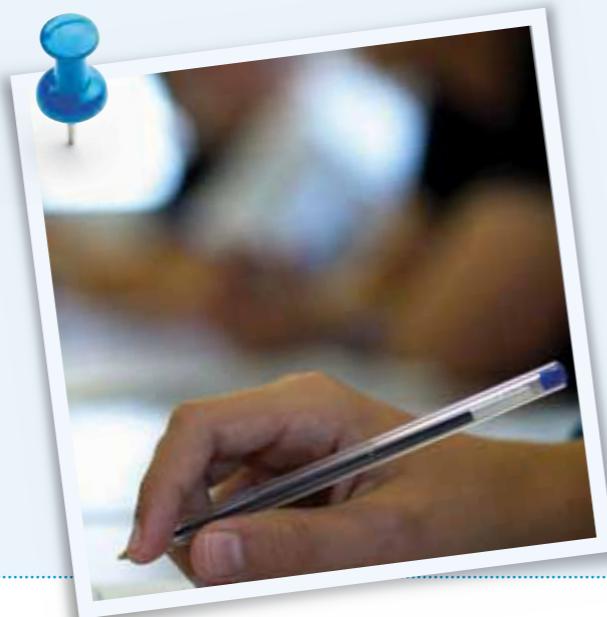
The Year 6 School Assessment Test results have never been so good. The 2012 leavers achieved the following:

Mathematics	Reading	Writing
Level 4	95%	100%
Level 5	45%	60%
Level 6	5%	2.5%

According to the Department for Education Level 4 is the expected level for a Year 6 pupil (Key stage 2 aged 10 to 11 years) and Level 5 to 6 is the target Level at year 9 (Key stage 3 aged 13 to 14). Pupils and their teachers have proved that the hard work through their final primary year has paid off as seen in the results.

Chris Hirst, Headteacher, was very pleased with the results and said: *'We wish them well as they move onto the next stage of their educational career. I am sure they will all achieve 'great things' and I am looking forward to hearing about their successes'.*

More than half of the leavers have gone on to our local village secondary school at Chiltern Edge, while the others have joined Gillotts in Henley, Langtree in Woodcote, Highdown in Emmer Green, Reading Boys, Bluecoats, Crosfields, The Abbey and Queen Anne's. ■



# Congratulations 2... Record GCSE results at Chiltern Edge School

Students and staff at Chiltern Edge School celebrated an excellent set of GCSE exam results with several school records being broken.

## Highlights

There was a substantial improvement from 2011 on the key national benchmark measures with 66% of students achieving 5 x A\*- C grades including English and Mathematics.

A record 79% of students achieved 5 x A\*- C grades. The Mathematics department also achieved a 'best ever' with 73% of students gaining at least a C grade. 72% of all grades were at C or better.

The English Baccalaureate is a new measurement which was introduced as a performance measure in the 2010 tables. It is a measure which recognises where students have secured a C grade or better across a core of academic subjects – English, mathematics, history or geography, the sciences and a language. The results for this were also outstanding with 32% of students achieving at least a 'C' grade in the five examinations.

The school again performed well above expectations for the top grades with 30% of grades at A\*/A or Distinction,

well above national figures for a year group which closely resembles the ability profile of the national population. 35% of students achieved at least 5A\*/A grades.

A small number of students sat BTEC courses in Sport and Science for the first time and the results were excellent with a 98% pass rate at C grade equivalent.

## Top performers included;

Rebecca Wells 14 x A\*/A and Distinction

Jenny Card 13 x A\*/A and Distinction 1B

Stuart Beard 11x A\*/A and Distinction 2B

Mallan Hurst 12 x A\*/A and Distinction 2B

Leanne Reeves 12 x A\*/A and Distinction 1B

Sophie Lewis 11 x A\*/A and Distinction 3B

Will Merrison 11 x A\*/A and Distinction 2B

Headteacher Daniel Sadler said, *'These results are very pleasing and reflect the rapid improvement Chiltern Edge is making on many fronts. The changes we have made over the last three years are now having a significant impact on student achievement and progress'*. ■

# It's big...it's yellow...and it needs more drivers

The FISH Bus is a familiar sight in the village and surrounding locality. Together with the volunteer car drivers it provides a much needed transport service for those in the village, and wider community, who cannot drive or who are no longer comfortable with driving or who have slight mobility issues.

The FISH Bus makes regular weekly shopping trips to local centres and also offers a monthly programme of social outings to places of interest in the wider area. The majority of its passengers are senior residents but it is a community bus and available to anyone who requires such provision. However, it does not have wheelchair or disabled facilities so passengers are required to have independent mobility.

The bus is driven by a small team of volunteers who average about two or three trips a month at their convenience. The FISH charity is looking to recruit some new bus drivers following the retirement of two of its valued members. Could this be YOU??

The bus does look quite big but it is not difficult to drive and any new volunteers



would not be expected to carry passengers until they had enough practice to feel confident. However, all prospective drivers do need to have the D1 category for Minibuses on their driving licence (automatic if car test was passed before 1997).

So if this sounds interesting and you can offer a few weekdays availability every month on a regular basis then please email John Pearman, the Bus Manager, on [pearman@dial.pipex.com](mailto:pearman@dial.pipex.com) who will be very pleased to provide you with some more information before you decide. Alternatively phone Fred Nickson, the FISH Chairperson, on 0118 9724520.

By the way, just in case you have forgotten FISH stands for Friendship In Sickness and Health. ■

## Winners of the Sonning Common Gardens Competition

### FIRST

#### Mr and Mrs John Lambourn, The Russets, 10A Kennylands Road.

Stunningly beautiful, large garden with a profusion of red, white and blue flowers, immaculate lawn and mature "blue" conifer.

### SECOND

#### Mrs Pam Franklin, 20 Woodlands Road

An obviously much loved garden, full of interest and colour. Baskets and tubs, neat lawn and well trimmed shrubs

### THIRD

#### Lyn Coker and D Knox, Crowsley Way

A real wow. Small area of baskets and tubs brimming with variety of colourful flowering plants.

Thanks to everyone who nominated a garden. You suggested plenty of quality gardens for the judges to choose from. ■



# Trees planted to enhance the village centre

BY JO STOVES

Accompanied by many good wishes from friendly passing shoppers, the Village Gardeners set out to erect two planters containing flowering Cherry trees outside the Village Hall on 5 August. It proved to be a very time consuming task but there was much laughter and good humour from all who came to help.



The containers were made of wooden blocks which needed assembling, filling with gravel, drainage, topsoil and then planting. The task group were very pleased with the finished result which will enhance the centre of the village.

"There are cherry trees here in our village" the members of Nottakwire sang to John Howell, MP, members of Village Gardeners and passers by, as simple plaques were fitted to the planters outside the Village Hall.



"Their joint efforts have greatly enhanced the village for everyone" said Margaret and Elaine as they thanked members of Village Gardeners and Nottakwire. "It is a good example of groups working together and achieving more than would be possible independently".

John Howell commended Nottakwire on their singing and fund raising of £800. The short ceremony ended with "Oh What a Beautiful Morning". ■



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# Local (junior!) Super Hero

Jack Lambert (aged 8) lives in Reades Lane and attends Stoke Row Primary School. He wanted to raise some funds for his school towards replacing temporary buildings, and his family are keen walkers, so he decided he would like to try the Three Peaks Challenge. This is a very popular challenge of climbing the three highest mountains in Great Britain within 24 hours - Ben Nevis in the Scottish Highlands, Scafell Pike in the Lake District and Snowdon in Wales.

Jack's parents had previously completed the challenge and had scaled two of the three mountains several times before. Jack himself first climbed Snowdon when he was just three-and-a-half.

They set off on their trip after school had finished at the end of July. Jack's dad Mark was climbing with him and mum Rachel was driving them between the mountains. Unfortunately the weather was sometimes very wet and extremely cold for the time of year, but they persevered.

Despite the weather and Jack suffering sickness, they managed to complete the challenge in a fantastic 22 hours and 12 minutes.

Jack's dad - *"It was a lot harder this time because we climbed the mountains a lot more quickly. Jack's very competitive so he wanted to know what time his mum had done and wanted to beat her with*

*every peak. He did really, really well. At the end he was less tired than I was"*

Mum Rachel - *"They were already drenched before they had a chance to change into their wet weather gear so they stayed as they were and with the wind coming towards them as well it was very, very cold. I couldn't sleep at Ben Nevis because I was worried for them as every now and then there was a downpour. We were much luckier with the weather two years ago. We are really, really proud of him"*

Jack - *"I don't believe that I've done it - it's just weird."*

The pair raised more than £4,700, the school are aiming for £60,000 by April 2013 to help pay for the replacement of temporary buildings. More than a third of the total has been raised since the appeal was launched in April.

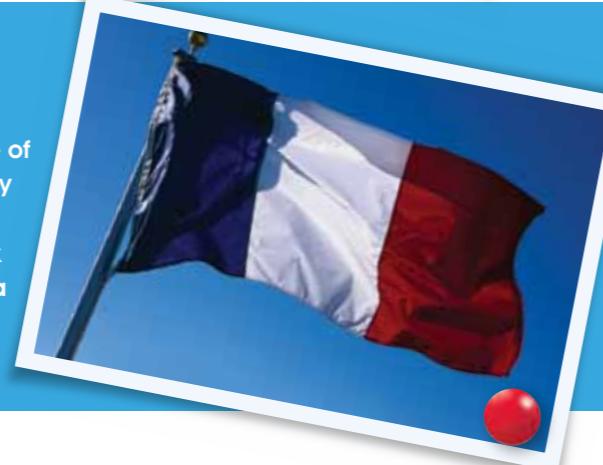
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The previous youngest recorded person to complete the Three Peaks Challenge was Beccie Shedd, eight, from Barnsley, in 2003. ■



## Francophiles one and all

We know there is support out there and therefore we are going ahead to welcome a group of French people from our twin village of St. Luc et Guichainville. The two sets of dates for a proposed visit by them are the weekends of 16-18 or 23-25 November. If anyone is interested in hosting some French visitors on either of those 2 week ends please contact Jo Quinton - [joquinton@gmail.com](mailto:joquinton@gmail.com), Barbara Crawshaw - [crawshawbarbara@gmail.com](mailto:crawshawbarbara@gmail.com) or Chris Bickerton - [chrisbickerton@hotmail.com](mailto:chrisbickerton@hotmail.com) ■



## Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) marches on!

### An amazing 105 village site, landscape and character surveys have been completed

The landscape evaluations and village character surveys are very important as they put the possible development sites SON 1 – 14 into context with the neighbouring countryside and residential areas. These will provide considerable data to decide whether they would, or would not be suitable sites for development.

The latest stage in our village consultation process was held on Saturday 15 September - Design Day 4. The drop in session provided the opportunity to give views about the regeneration of the village centre; to comment on the Vision for Sonning Common 2026 and to attend workshops for more detailed input to the site summaries. Again over 100 people attended.

Every home in the village has received a copy of Vision 2026 and been asked to complete and return the Housing Needs Survey. The response and involvement of the people of Sonning Common has been exceptional and commented by the consultants. Their comments are valued as they have worked with many towns and villages.

It's our village, so we are trying to make it our choice. Your views are being taken very seriously. THANKS to all of you who have been closely involved and to those of you who are unable to be actively involved, but continue to be supportive on a more ad hoc basis.

The next NDP session will be held in the evening look out for details please. ■

CLLR. BARRIE GREENWOOD



## Farm visit with Lions

Each year a different group of very special young children are selected to come over from Belarus to stay here in England for a month, away from the radioactivity poisoning ever present in their homeland since the Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster in mid 1984. Just one month of respite away from this environment much enhances their health and extends their life expectancy.

On Friday 3 August 10 children, 11 to 15 years, spent the day taking part in the various farm activities including wading in the nearby river Pang, pond dipping, feeding the animals, tractor trailer riding and insect identification.

Staff at Rushall Farm generously gave their time and facilities free, to enable these visiting young children to experience life on an English farm. They met, at close quarters, donkeys, cows, a bull, and lambs – something those from the larger communities in Belarus do not often get a chance to see. A happy hour was spent fishing with nets in the local river, which they cannot do back home as the water is too contaminated to play in.

For more details please contact Lions Secretary Alan Wright on tel: 0845 833 9837

email: [info@lions-gwd.org.uk](mailto:info@lions-gwd.org.uk) Website: [www.lions-gwd.org.uk](http://www.lions-gwd.org.uk)

## Sonning Common Society still as relevant today

In the early 1960s Sonning Common was declared an area for development and the lack of local consultation caused much confusion and indignation. The village will have to accept a number of new houses determined by SODCs core strategy. The Society is concerned with the location and design of new buildings, will contest the proposed number and fight to reduce it as far as possible. We support the NDP and our aim is to sustain a balanced community without losing those features which attract people to live here.

The society compiles the Sonning Common Guide, two Newsletters are issued each year and Spring and Autumn Meetings are held at which there are illustrated talks and discussions - watch the notice boards for details!

The subscription is a very reasonable £3.00 for a family or £2.00 for a single member so, that we can continue to work for the benefit of the village, fill in the attached form and return it to Mrs. J. Pitson, 9 Carling Road, RG4 9TG, with your subscription.

I/We wish to become a member(s) of The Sonning Common Society:

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## A new Beaver Colony has been started in Sonning Common!

Based at the Scout Hut in Baskerville Road they meet every Friday afternoon from 4.30pm to 6.00pm.

Boys and girls are welcome and can join from 6 to 8 years old.

Please contact Melissa on 07861 861033 for more information.



**Christmas Lunch**  
25 December 2012  
Village Hall  
Tickets from Chrissie Phillips-Tilbury  
0118 9721058  
£12.00

**Pauline Twyman ART EXHIBITION**  
Fire Station Gallery, Henley (behind Town Hall)  
8-14 November 2012

**The Reformation pub,  
Gallowtree Common**  
Tuesday, 16 October at 8pm

**Under Milk Wood  
by Dylan Thomas**  
Wednesday, 14 November

All welcome further details from  
j@titchenerj.freeserve.co.uk

**CHILTERN  
PLAYERS**

## Sonning Common and Peppard Junior Table Tennis Club has relaunched!

A great new coach - Graham Outram - has divided all the juniors into two groups (Stage One and Stage Two) - mostly just on the basis of age.

Coaching will be every Friday from 6-7pm, and then from 7-8pm - £2.50 per session. Individuals will normally stay in the same groups unless a move is agreed.

New starters are welcome - please contact Derek Brooke - Wavell for session availability - d.wavell@talktalk.net

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- You require health information or reassurance about what to do next

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## Nuisance phone calls

Thames Valley Police advise anyone receiving nuisance phone calls can register their number with the telephone preference service which will help prevent the receipt of live unsolicited sales and marketing calls to a landline or mobile telephone number. It will not stop computer generated calls or calls that are not sales and marketing related.

To register your number with the telephone preference service:

Call **0800 398 893** or [www.tpsonline.org.uk](http://www.tpsonline.org.uk)

If you would like to speak to a BT Nuisance Call Advisor free of charge, anytime of the day or night, call 0800 661 441. If you are not with BT please call your own service provider for help and advice.

Carol Rudd (Police, NHW & Community Messaging Co-ordinator, South Oxon & Vale LPA)

## Conkers & Apples Challenge

Cross Lanes Fruit Farm, Mapledurham, RG4 7UW  
Apple Open Day on Sunday 14th October 2012,  
10.00am to 5.00pm.

The local Lions will provide you with a fresh conker complete with string in return for a donation of £1 to Lions charity funds.

### COMPETITION RULES:

1. Only fresh conkers may be used, as will be provided
2. Players take alternate hits at their opponent's conker.
3. The player whose conker is to be hit holds it with the string wrapped round one hand and suspends it at a height to suit his/her opponent. It must be kept still.
4. The striker holds his/her conker in one hand and the end of his/her string with the other, then swings the conker to hit the opponent's conker.
5. A miss by the striker entitles the striker to another shot.
6. If the strings tangle the first player to call "strings" can claim an extra shot.

7. Alternate blows are struck until one of the conkers is destroyed; that is until no part of it remains on the string. The player with the surviving conker is deemed the winner.

For directions to and details about Cross Lanes

Fruit Farm see the website:  
[www.crosslanesfruitfarm.co.uk](http://www.crosslanesfruitfarm.co.uk)



## Apple Day Celebrations

Cross Lanes Fruit Farm, Mapledurham, RG4 7UW  
Sunday 14 October 10.00am-5.00pm

Delicious apples, over fifty varieties of English apples - sweet, sharp, juicy, crisp, nutty, rich, aromatic, complex and delicious.

Apple games for the children

Beekeepers will be keen to share the secrets of the bees with you.

Stalls will be selling delicious apple pies, cakes, muffins, jellies, local cider and plants

Guided walks at 11.00am, 12.30pm, 2.00pm and 3.30pm.

Join and discuss the effects of a season of cold wet weather and why Cox's Orange Pippins are scarce

Entrance and car parking are FREE.

Tea and refreshments available.

Farm Shop is open every Wednesday to Sunday from 10.00am to 6.00pm until the apples run out at Christmas.

Or see us at Farmers' Markets in Reading or Henley

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*Autumn Leaf*

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# Sibella Bonham Carter

known both as Miss B C and Bonny

"A woman who always looked to the future never the past"

By DIANA PEARMAN

In 2012, as the inhabitants of Sonning Common are involved in future plans for it's development, it seems an appropriate time to remember the wide ranging contribution this remarkable woman made to the village. The last time there were extensive building developments here was in the 1960's. In response to the lack of local consultation the Sonning Common Society was formed. Sibella was at first the secretary and then President.

Had she lived today, she may well have been involved, if not the leader, of the Neighbourhood Development Planning group??

Sibella's own words head up each section to reveal the story of her formative years and of her 'noble' connections.

**"I can just remember her"**

Soon after the birth of her younger brother David, Sibella's mother died.

Sibella was fond of telling others that she was just a year older than the century, the twentieth one. Her life crossed three centuries. Born in 1899 into a cultured

and privileged family, her father was a solicitor and home was in Bayswater near Paddington.

**"I did not particularly shine at school ... but one of the teachers fired me with the enthusiasm to learn"**

First at the local Kindergarten, run by the wife of the poet laureate John Masefield then onto Downe House in 1912 as a border, where she may have learned to become highly independent. Her father did not always remember to collect her for the holidays!! Her classmates included Elizabeth Bowen, the novelist, and Audrey Richards who became an anthropologist. Both were similarly exceptional women.

**"I only saw, sad to say, a deaf blind old lady"**

Sibella met Florence Nightingale who at the time did not make a great impression on the young Sibella but may well have influenced her decisions in later life?

**"I searched the waste paper baskets at 10 Downing Street ... and it was a poor tea"**

Her aunt was the daughter of Asquith, Prime Minister during WW1 and she was taken for tea at number 10 by her father. Sibella was left to her own devices and soon discovered the waste paper baskets in which were crumpled letters from famous people. She took them home, smoothed them out and kept the signatures in her autograph book.

**"It was a course for girls who were going to stay at home ... it was a pity I did not get to University, but I was told I couldn't do that"**

Sibella attended a one year course at Kings College for young ladies. She then supervised her father's house, checking the meals and servants, welcoming her father in the evening.

**"We found ourselves in a new world without men"**

Had she been born at a different time she would probably have married but almost a whole generation of young men died in WWI.

**"I was bored stiff and longed to do something useful"**

Eventually she persuaded her father to pay £60 so that she could train as a midwife at the General Lying -in hospital in London. During her midwifery career she delivered 85 babies and she compiled a set of beautifully drawn sketches of her patients.

**"One of the highlights of my early years"**

A refugee Belgian family lived with the Bonham Carters during WW1 and they became Sibella's good friends. She was appalled by the dreadful casualty rate and the bombings.



Her remarkable contribution to life in this village is so extensive it is almost impossible to find sufficient superlatives to describe it. Perhaps it is summed up by the following – in her own words.

**"I have enjoyed a long life especially the last part as I have been able to do things"**

In 1950, three years after her father died Sibella moved to Sonning Common to 1 Woodlands Road where she adapted the house and set up a nursery, licensed to take 5 babies. Christopher, she adopted, and many others were fostered by her.

One of her first actions in her adopted village was to advocate the improvement of the constantly flooding end of Woodlands Road. She formed a committee which, with contributions from residents, was successful in having the road repaired and subsequently adopted by the council in 1959.

**"They could form their own cricket team"**

Sibella set up a trust to pay for the pavilion at Bishopswood in memory of her father and his 10 brothers. She also supported the local football team and in 1959 bought their first football, became a member of the club and later its vice

President. She walked to support their away matches and even knitted their scarves!

**"I phoned through with just 15 minutes to spare before the bidding closed. It was very exciting"**

This may have been her finest hour, when she came through to top up the bid of Sonning Common Open Spaces Trust (SCOST) for the purchase of Kennylands field. Money had been raised by donations, £24,000 from the residents, but this amount could not have outbid the commercial developer without Sibella's £90,000 donation.

Her accomplishments and breadth of interests were extensive?

Sibella was a talented artist and learned lithography. She loved music; in her youth sang in a Bach choir conducted by Vaughan Williams; with the choir at Peppard church and the South Chiltern Choral Society. She enjoyed play reading with the Chiltern Players and was the President for some time. She made her own clothes, grew her own vegetables and bound the church hymn books by hand. As a member of the English Folk and Dance society she knew Cecil Sharp who was the founder.

At 60 she took up Judo, studied English Literature to A level at 70, and learned

Greek aged 90. Her IQ was measured to be 160 by MENSA when she was 93 becoming the oldest member at that time. She was still walking a mile around the village as a centenarian, although maybe not quite so quickly!

Aged 105 (2005 the year she died) she told a reporter "Life just keeps getting better"

**Looking back over her long life** she said 'I am not a person who has regrets. To spend time regretting is a sheer waste of time. I've made mistakes like other people, but what's the use of pouring over them, better to go and do something else. I call myself a happy person because I have achieved most of the things I wanted to do.'

# Anecdotes AND MEMORIES

A collection of thoughts from those who knew her.

## YOU ARE LATE!

On the appointed day the interviewers from Meridian TV were delayed and it was 4pm before we knocked on the door. Miss BC opened the door dressed to go out and said "You are late! I am going out for my walk!" I eventually persuaded her to relent and we were invited in. But the interviewers had to be taught how to behave! She lectured them for an hour on various aspects of her illustrious family and only then allowed them to ask a few questions about Millennium Green!

ROBIN HUNTER

When we first moved into Sonning Common we lived at Bembridge, 'the house with the monkey puzzle tree' by what was then known as Brinds Corner. We were still in the throes of unpacking when the telephone rang, "Bonham Carter here", just planted some trees on the grass opposite your house.

"Oh yes".

"They will need watering and I would be obliged if you would do that, thank you".  
So we did, we didn't dare disobey such a summons.  
Unfortunately it was a hot spell and I am ashamed to say that one of the trees didn't make it. We never dared tell Sibella!

JILL AND ROGER KENDALL

## SIBELLA, ALTHOUGH BORN A VICTORIAN, IS TRULY AN ELIZABETHAN IN OUTLOOK

One day she was seen walking down Woodlands Road with a pick axe over her shoulder. She, at 90 years old in 1999, had been to a tree planting session in Old Copse. Very rarely discouraged, always cheerful, totally lacking in self pity, possessing a lively sense of humour and interested in almost anything one can mention.

KITTY JEFFERY



## LIFE LONG LEARNING AWARD

I thought I might share with you my photo of Miss Bonham-Carter receiving an award from Malcolm Wicks MP in London May 2000. There were 19 regional winners aged 80 upwards, all learning a new subject or skill. Miss Bonham-Carter was teaching herself to read Greek.

TINA BROWN

My over-riding memory of Sibella Bonham-Carter was her indefatigability in everything she did - walking throughout the village to deliver leaflets for some good cause; standing outside the post office handing them out in all weathers; making her own clothes, including overcoats; reading music or recently published political works so that she could "keep up with the times" - despite her poor eyesight.

A group of us used to take her out to lunch to celebrate her birthday. On one occasion she told us of her first flight to France in an open topped plane, sitting behind the pilot. Asked whether she wore a flying helmet she replied "No, just a silk scarf to keep my hair tidy".

She was an indomitable woman - no wonder the grim reaper had a job to catch up with her.

BRENDA DAMP



## PURCHASED FROM MISS SIBELLA BONHAM-CARTER (67 LEA ROAD) IN JULY 1999 BY DOUGLAS AND YVONNE KEDGE

This was the last remaining item of this kind in her folder following the sale of her work in the village, which generated considerable local interest. She had completed the work at the London School of Art when young, but how to sell it was not part of the course. At the age of 100 she was thrilled by her first sales.

## HER INFLUENCE AND DEDICATION TO OUR VILLAGE WILL NEVER BE FULLY APPRECIATED

My contact with her during the rapid growth of Sonning Common started in 1958. I had bought a plot of land on Peppard Road to build my house after I had married.

I was measuring up the plot when I met this lady in a tweed skirt and deer stalker hat, who was also measuring up land at the Wood Lane Close end of my plot.

"I want this land for a play area as the planners have omitted an area to play - how much do you want for it?" she asked me. I must have annoyed her, my co-operation was negative.

DON NAISH



## TO ME THE ONE BENEFICE THAT MOST REVEALS HER CHARACTER

The proposal to provide the Village Hall was foundering because it would have insufficient car parking. So she gave (not sold, gave) a substantial part of her garden for car parking and an access way, so that the traffic and activity of a place of public assembly would come up to the side of her house, but, what mattered to her, was that Sonning Common would have its Village Hall.

Those silver birches behind the Village Hall were hers.

LORD SILSOE

## AT AGE 93

Our memories of Sibella and the time she spent in South Chiltern Choral Society, the only female tenor. She began her time there as a first Alto then progressed to second Alto and then became the first and only lady tenor that the society has ever had. She left before she could progress to the Bass section! They remember a vigorous, outspoken lady with strong views. When it was suggested that the choir sing John Gardner's The Holly and the Ivy at one Christmas concert, Sibella was of the opinion that it was vastly inferior to the traditional version and made sure her thoughts were known to all at rehearsals.

JANE AND GWYN ARCH

After she sold 4 items, she said: "I expect it is because of my notoriety". When she had sold 14 items, she had to concede that she might have some merit as an artist. Her side-view portrait of Ralph Vaughan Williams, done at a concert without his knowledge, was accepted after his death by the National Portrait Gallery



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Our service has grown and expanded ever since in response to the needs of local people. Today we have fourteen professional counsellors who give their

time voluntarily to offer affordable counselling and psychotherapy to young people and adults in the locality.

There is no doubt that there is a growing need for counselling services. A report published in June by Lord Layard and a distinguished panel of psychologists, doctors, NHS managers and economists pointed out that nearly half of all ill health in those under 65 is mental illness, but only a quarter of sufferers are receiving treatment. With six million people suffering from depression or crippling anxiety conditions and one in every three families having someone who is mentally ill, the scale of the problem is clear.

The report emphasises the success of psychological therapy: "a half of all patients with anxiety conditions will

recover, most permanently, after ten sessions of treatment on average". The long-term benefits to the lives of patients, their families and society as a whole are incalculable.

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# Parish council NEWS

- The repair of the footpaths is now complete.
- Rotherfield United Football Club has now received its £7000 grant from the parish council.
- The parish clerk has reminded One Stop of their duty of care regarding the forecourt and has been assured that the resurfacing will be done.
- The parish council has paid, for the third time, for damage done by careless drivers to the wall at One Stop. A reflective post has now been erected.

- The parish council is providing a hose pipe and water connection to aid the Village Gardeners with their care of the new planters outside the village hall.
- We are now working with the County Council on the design and position of the bus shelter at Essex Way.
- Councillors attended a thank you reception at the Herb Farm given by Club SC Councillor Carol Viney. In her speech said that if the parish council had not agreed the grant there would have been no money forthcoming.

**COUNCILLOR CRISSIE PHILLIPS-TILBURY**

from the County Council and the club would have closed.

- Request for initial tenders have gone out to four potential contractors for the building of the Roller park. Their outline proposals were on display on 1st September.

- The Parish Clerk has asked me to remind residents to please cut their hedges where necessary.

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# Tom Fort NEIGHBOURS

Generally speaking you cannot choose your neighbours; you are either lucky or you are not. I was exceptionally lucky with Walter and Nora Dunn.

When I moved to Sonning Common nearly twenty years ago I did not know a soul in the village. I bought a house in Kidmore Lane with a flimsy wire fence down one side of the garden, and it was not long before I was regularly chatting over it to the elderly couple on the other side as they tended to their vegetables and fruit trees.

Nora was white-haired, Welsh, sharp in her mind and incisive in her judgements. Walter was immensely, inexhaustibly kind-hearted, the nicest and most generous of men. I discovered that his driving passion in life was painting. He showed me some of his work. It was very abstract and difficult for me – a philistine in such matters – to understand.

One day I had a load of horse manure delivered for my fruit and veg. There was more than I needed so I took a few barrow loads around to Walter and Nora's. A little while later I came

back from somewhere to find a painting had been left for me. It was of a pike, a favourite fish of mine. It is amazingly faithful, beautifully and skilfully done, and to my shame I thought Walter painted abstracts because he couldn't do real life.

In time I moved to the middle of the village, but we stayed very good friends. Walter got dearer and older and every now and then he would say that his painting days were over. But the urge was always too much for him and he always went back to his paints and his workroom.



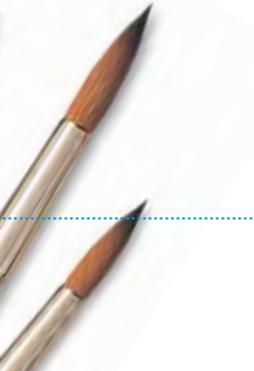
## Local artist leaves after 40 years in post

By JOAN GRUMMANT

Local artist, Pauline Twyman, is stepping down from teaching the local authority run art class at the Adult Education Centre Sonning Common. She has taught drawing and painting for over forty years, based at Chiltern Edge School and was also a part time art teacher at Sonning Common Primary School. She will be sorely missed and has taught many adults and children from the local area.

At one time when Pauline was chairman of the local playgroup, her pupils ranged in age from three to ninety three and her enthusiasm and commitment was communicated to all of those lucky enough to be part of her classes. She has strived hard to inspire others as well as exhibiting her own work.

Pauline, who has lived in Sonning Common for fifty three years, was privileged enough to win a major county scholarship to study art at Reading University and has always felt the need to



## Local residents support CCA summer fayre

The CCA staff would like to thank everybody in Sonning Common and the surrounding villages for their support at the recent Summer Fayre, including all the local business who donated very generously with meal and meat vouchers, a car valet, refreshments, printing services and many other gifts. Although the weather wasn't very good, God certainly blessed us with a steady footfall during the morning and the magnificent sum of £766.17 was raised. Once again, many thanks, and we look forward to meeting with you again when you visit our shop. ■

JOAN BAWDEN Supervisor

## Hats off to the Village Gardeners

I was in the village centre this weekend (1 Sept) - and it was sunny (unusual I know!). I was struck by how very stunning the flower beds and village hall area look right now. I think this is the brightest the village has ever been and this is thanks to the small group of very dedicated Village Gardeners who have transformed the village for all of us to enjoy.

Thank you very much. I am sure many, many people appreciate your efforts. ■

JILL GRINSTED Kennylands Road

## Village gardeners receive accolade and donation

During our recent visit to Sonning Common my wife and I were very impressed with the results of the efforts of the Village Gardeners to restore the village flower beds and to beautify the area around the village hall. Well done all of you! Please accept the enclosed donation to your funds. ■

JOHN HENRY LEWIS  
Maple Cottage, Mere, Wilts.

## Oh dear!

So Tom Fort (Making Bread, August edition) finds it 'a bit painful' having to obtain his yeast from Tesco because he is 'not really a Tesco person.' How gloriously, snobbish and pompous. ■

CAROL EVANS Grove Road

## Praise for the newest pub in the village

Whilst some of our local pubs have either gone into decline or closed their doors entirely, it is refreshing to see one that is trying very hard to buck the trend, and that is the Butchers Arms. A friendly welcome is always given by a young couple offering good food at sensible prices and not the so called "Gastro pricing".

Also good real ale is available. My wife and I wish them well. ■

J & J WATKINS Grove Road

## Be aware this is a con!

I have just been conned and it has made me hopping mad.

I realised that my European Health Insurance Card was out of date, so I went online and clicked onto the site at the top of the list, filled in all the details and paid over my £14.99.

Big mistake as this card is FREE. It made me realise just how easy it is to be taken in by what appear to be a perfectly bona fide site. At least it was only £14.99 and not more.

That is the beauty of the scam, I would have been suspicious if it had cost me much more. ■

CHRISSEY PHILLIPS-TILBURY Woodlands Road

## Footpath repaired at last

I should like to express sincere thanks to Cllr Carol Viney and SC Parish Council, for arranging the complete renewal - at last - of Fulford Way, at the upper end where it meets Woodlands Road.

For many years residents and villagers using this footpath have had to battle with uneven, treacherous, slippery, muddy journeys up and down - and having made a number of enquiries trying to establish responsibility for maintenance of the footpath in order that something be done about it, I was about to ask yet again.

Lo and behold - a SODC workforce appeared last week and swiftly levelled and re-tarmaced the surface. It is now a pleasure to use. Many thanks are due to Cllr Viney and our own Parish Councillors for acting on our numerous requests so that the footpath is now safe and attractive for all those who use it. ■

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## AN INTERVIEW WITH... Nikki Mitchell

By ROS VARNES

*A few lucky breaks coupled with talent, hard work and determination have led to one village resident enjoying a rewarding career as a BBC television journalist.*

Nikki Mitchell, as she is known at work, jokes that journalism is her third career but she got there in the end!

She started off as a graphic illustrator of greetings cards, then worked in finance and administration for the BBC monitoring service at Caversham before finding her true vocation when BBC Oxford TV was launched about 13 years ago.

Before moving into TV, Nikki did a two-year stint with local BBC radio. She traces the beginnings of her journalistic career back to the days when she used to answer the phone and put callers through to BBC Radio Berkshire presenter Andrew Peach when he was on air.

One day a story came into the newsroom, claiming that fish were dying in local rivers due to polluted water running off the Newbury by-pass building site. With all the journalists already out on other stories, Nikki was faced with a decision: cover the story herself or lose it.

She chose to cover the story, whizzed over to the Newbury by-pass site, investigated the allegations, and, that evening, did a successful live interview for the drive-time show.

Nikki, who lives in Grove Road with her husband Stephen and sons Felix, seven and Dexter, five, said: "I had no degree, no journalistic training but plenty of drive and enthusiasm."

"I would always say to people who are looking for opportunities: bother people,

don't take no for an answer, work for nothing and continually generate new ideas. Always have something to offer people."

Nikki now works two days a week as a video journalist for BBC Oxford TV news, having since completed a series of BBC training courses and gained plenty of experience.

She researches, films, writes, edits and presents reports for the weekday regional news programme, which follows the main network news on BBC One. The programme's broadcast area reaches from the Cotswolds to the Chiltern Hills and from Milton Keynes to Swindon.

Most of Nikki's reports are only one-and-a-half minutes long and condensing a series of interviews and pictures into a clear, informative and entertaining report can be quite a challenge. But it's one she enjoys.

She says: "I wake up in the morning and want to go to work. The days whizz by and there is no time to get bored. Every day is different and because my reports are usually transmitted the same day, I rarely take stress home with me.

"I get to meet and interview really interesting people - ordinary people with extraordinary tales to tell - celebrities, sports personalities and powerful politicians. I go to fascinating places the general public rarely sees and am often privileged to watch events unfold first hand.

"Juggling the demands of filming on location and presenting a report is tricky. I can be in wellies and waterproofs, filming on a muddy hill in the howling wind and rain in the morning, and then be expected to turn up in the studio, or on location, to present a live report, looking smart, groomed and relaxed.

"The job can be very emotional. I've had to film some terrible things, some awful car wrecks, for example, and I've had to interview people who've lost friends and family in terrible circumstances.



"But I am continually amazed by how welcoming people are, and how generous they are with their time, even in sometimes difficult circumstances."

This summer Nikki covered the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations at Henley Business School and the heroes' return to Henley following the Olympic Games. More locally she has investigated a controversy over the keeping of chickens at the allotments in Gallowtree Road.

Nikki believes that community stories are vital and is keen to hear from anyone with a good local story to tell. Contact: nikki.mitchell@bbc.co.uk ■

# JUST FOR KIDS

Hi everyone,

I hope you guys have had nice holidays and had fun watching the Olympics. Did any of you go because I'd love to hear about it! If not, did you watch any races or, like me, stay up late to see the opening or the closing ceremony? I thought it was all so exciting. My favourite sport was the gymnastics, and I thought the giant octopus was really cool.

The summer holidays have whizzed past, and I've been lucky enough to have been to Scotland (cold, lots of walks), Cornwall (warm, lots of surfing) and Spain (boiling, lots of swimming). I bet some of you went to exotic locations and I'd love to hear about that or anything else you've been up to.

New for this issue is a word search - I hope you enjoy it.

ANOUSKA



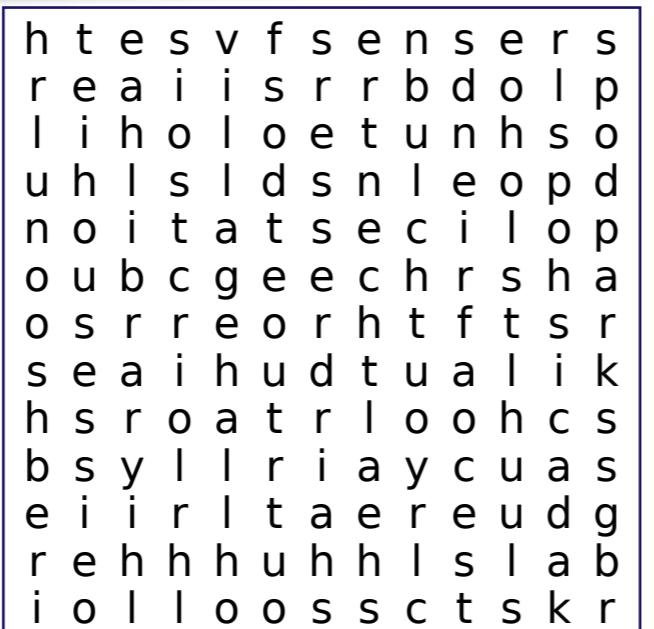
## The Secret Village

I am proud to announce that the winner of the last issue is: (drum roll, please) Emily Williams. Emily goes to Sonning Common school and if you know her please say 'well done'. Emily correctly said it was in Lea Road Park at the younger children's section. See if you can beat Emily in this issue but I've got to warn you she's fast!



### SONNING COMMON

Our village is great because we have lots of facilities. See if you can find them all in this word search.



friends  
hairdressers  
health centre  
houses  
library  
parks  
police station  
school  
shops  
village hall  
youth club

### HOLIDAY CLUB

The Holiday Club at Chiltern Edge is a great place to go when your mum and dad are at work, or just if you're feeling bored. It has a wide range of activities so there is always something new to try, such as outdoor arts and crafts, judo, archery and trampolining. It's really fun and I should know because I've been there! My favourite activities are party games, creative cookery, arts and crafts, musical theatre... in fact, I'm not sure which are my best.



### YOUNG ACHIEVER'S AWARD

The SODC Awards scheme for young people between 11 and 18 for arts, sports and citizenship.

Awards of up to £250 will be made to successful winners. Applications and nominations will be accepted from 3 September to 21 December 2012.

Email [grants@southvale.gov.uk](mailto:grants@southvale.gov.uk)



### Plans for the SONNING COMMON ROLLER PARK move forward

On Saturday, 1 September four potential suppliers were invited to the Sonning Common Village Hall to present initial design ideas which could be achieved within the given budget. The event was attended by about twenty very enthusiastic youngsters (including members of the Sonning Common Youth Forum), some parents as well as interested Sonning Common residents.

Everybody was eager to chat to the suppliers and share ideas. Feed back forms were completed by the children and the results of these will form the basis of the brief which will subsequently be submitted to the suppliers for tender.

A very good start to September: watch this space for further updates!

CAROLE LEWIS  
SC Roller Park Working Party

### Story lab and the

follow on afterwards

By the time you read this summer will be over and the Story Lab Summer Reading Challenge will have finished. (If your children didn't quite manage to finish the challenge, just ask the library staff and we might be able to give you a bit more time) I'd like to thank Adam, our Story Lab volunteer, who made our job so much easier this year.

The library organised special Saturday Storytimes throughout the month of August on the theme of 'Stories from around the World', which I feel were a great success. The countries covered were France, Barbados, Zambia and the Netherlands. I'd like to thank all the people who helped out: Madame Quinton for her French rainbow stories; Val Harris for her Barbadian turtle tales; and Mrs Wilbrink for her Dutch Miffy stories. Drinks and home-made cakes were on sale to raise funds for the Friends of Sonning Common Library, and I'd like to thank all those who baked and sold. (Volunteers to bake & sell are always welcome!)

I'd also like to thank all the parents and children who came to the library so often over the summer, and my long suffering staff who are always supportive.

Saturday story times are continuing, with stories to listen to at 10 o'clock, and pictures to colour in, and we will continue to provide hot and cold drinks on Saturdays on a self-service basis, for a small charge.

We're planning a Sinterklaas storytime at the end of November – look out for posters nearer the time!

ROSEMARY DUNSTAN  
Library manager  
Sonning Common Library



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PUT YOUR CLUB OR GROUP IN THE  
Sonning Common Guide

The Guide contains contact details, names or email addresses of local volunteer groups, sports clubs, schools, churches, etc. Copies are sold for 50p each in the Library, Occasions and other village shops as a source of information for everyone, especially newcomers to the village.

It is published by the Sonning Common Society and is updated each year. We are keen to include as many local organisations as possible so if you would like your organisation to be included in the next edition please complete the form below and return it as requested. If you would like further information please 'phone 0118 972 3294.

## ENTRY FOR THE SONNING COMMON GUIDE:

Name of organisation:

Contact name:

Telephone number:

email:

Venue, day and time of meeting (if applicable):

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## Church news

We welcome in the  
"season of mists and  
mellow fruitfulness"

**Sunday 7 October**

Harvest Lunch at Kidmore End School – an opportunity for families to come together and share simple wholesome food.

**Sunday 4 November at  
6.30pm**

A chance to give thanks and remember loved ones who have died at our All Souls Tide service at St John's Kidmore End. All are welcome - regular church goers or not. You'll be able to light a candle in memory of a loved one and if you want to submit the name of that loved one to be read out at the service, please contact

Jenny MacGregor (01189 472855) or Karen Broadbent (01189 724606) - our church wardens. It is a very moving service.

**Sunday 11 November at  
10.50am**

Those wishing to attend our Remembrance Service - meet at the War Memorial, Kidmore End, then on to St John's when the British Legion colours are received into the Sanctuary.

**Saturday 17 November**

Mammoth joint school/church Christmas Fair at Kidmore End School. Forget high street Christmas shopping or Amazon.

**Sunday 18 November at 9.30**

Come and help us celebrate

the consecration (in 1967) of Christ the King church in Sedgewell Road. Hidden away next to the garage, you might not know it's there but you'll receive a warm welcome and a cup of coffee after the short Sunday service. ■

**ROSEMARY HOUSE**

**Springwater Church  
– Blounts Court Road –  
Peppard Common**

We are very pleased indeed to welcome Rev Chris Lewis as our new full time Minister, and his wife Margaret (Mags), who are now living in the Manse attached to the church.

We want to extend our grateful

thanks to Barry and Bunny Kirk who have so graciously guided the church over the last few years, and we are delighted that they will be maintaining their connection with us in the future.

In September church life starts in earnest again after the holidays with Cradle Club, the Ark, Sunday School, all for children and an Alpha course, home groups and men's and women's groups throughout the week. All are warmly welcome.

For information please call the office on 0118 9724519. ■

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# October

MONDAY 1	FISH - Garden Centre Visit	1.30pm
TUESDAY 2	Chiltern Edge open morning - Chiltern Edge School	9.15 - 10.45am
WEDNESDAY 3	Chiltern Edge open morning - Chiltern Edge School	9.15 - 10.45am
FRIDAY 5	Notts small group - Village Hall	10am
FRIDAY 5	British Legion - Tea dance - Village Hall	2 - 4pm
FRIDAY 12	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45 - 11.30am
FRIDAY 12	CESA Quiz night - Chiltern Edge School	7pm
SUNDAY 14	Apple Day Celebrations including conkers challenge Cross Lanes Fruit Farm, Mapledurham	10am - 5pm
MONDAY 15	Sonning Common Parish Council - Village Hall	8pm
TUESDAY 16	Chiltern Players. Open play reading evening. Everybody welcome. The Reformation, Gallowtree Common	8pm
TUESDAY 16	Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society - "Shrubs of Distinction" by John Negus Peppard War Memorial Hall	7.30 - 9pm
THURSDAY 18	FISH - Pub lunch	11.30am
THURSDAY 18	Sonning Common Women's Institute - "Don't cry for me Argentina". A talk on the Wichi people by Virginia Patterson. Visitors welcome Village Hall	7.30pm
FRIDAY 19	Notts small group - Village Hall	10am
FRIDAY 19	British Legion Tea dance - Village Hall	2 - 4pm
FRIDAY 19	Peppard Revels Films - Gosford Park - Peppard War Memorial Hall	7pm
FRIDAY 26	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45 - 11.30am

# November

THURSDAY 1	Sonning Common Society - a talk by The Warburg Reserve, Bix on flora & fauna in the Reserve - Sonning Common Library	7.30pm
FRIDAY 2	Notts small group - Village Hall	10am
FRIDAY 2	British Legion - Tea dance - Village Hall	2 - 4pm
MONDAY 5	FISH - Garden Centre Visit	1.30pm
THURS - WED 8 - 14	Art Exhibition by local artist Pauline Twyman - Old Fire Station Gallery, Henley	
FRIDAY 9	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45 - 11.30am
TUESDAY 13	Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society - "Autumn Colour" by nursery owners Claire & Tony Powell - Peppard War Memorial Hall	7.30 - 9pm
WEDNESDAY 14	Chiltern Players. Open play reading evening. Everybody welcome. The Reformation, Gallowtree Common	8pm
THURSDAY 15	FISH - Pub lunch	11.30am
FRIDAY 16	Notts small group - Village Hall	10am
FRIDAY 16	British Legion - Tea dance - Village Hall	2 - 4pm
MONDAY 19	Sonning Common Parish Council - Village Hall	8pm
THURSDAY 22	Sonning Common Women's Institute - Flower Arranging Demonstration by Sue Hedges. Visitors welcome - Village Hall	7.30pm
FRIDAY 23	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45 - 11.30am
FRIDAY 23	Peppard Revels Films - Enigma - Peppard War Memorial Hall	7pm
THURSDAY 29	Notts small group - Village Hall	10am
FRIDAY 30	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45 - 11.30am
FRIDAY 30	British Legion - Tea dance - Village Hall	2 - 4pm

**FISH** runs regular shopping trips Henley and Reading town centres and to Tesco in Henley.  
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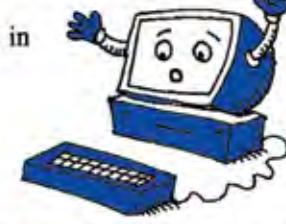


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